

Remarks

Reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested. Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 1-18 and 20-32 are pending in the application (claim 19 is canceled), with claims 1, 30 and 32 being the independent claims. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all outstanding rejections.

Interview Summary

The undersigned appreciates the time and attention extended by the Examiner during the interview conducted on June 28, 2005. The subject matter of independent claims 1 and 30 was discussed during the interview in view of U.S. Patent Numbers 6,073,283 to Zheng ("Zheng"), 5,908,681 to Foster ("Foster"), and 5,582,115 to Muller ("Muller"). Proposed amendments to claims 1 and 30 were discussed. The Examiner agreed that the subject of the proposed amendments was not anticipated by any of the cited references, and that the case would be further considered upon submission of the amendments.

Claim Rejections

Claims 1-3, 6-11, 13-15, and 20-22 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Zheng. Claims 4, 12, 16, 18, 23, 30, and 31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Zheng. Claims 5 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Zheng in view of Foster. Claims 24-29 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Zheng in view of Muller. Each of these rejections are traversed for the reasons below.

Independent Claim 1 and its Dependent Claims are Allowable

Independent claim 1 as amended recites "a flexible skirt fixedly coupled substantially along the perimeter of the flexible panel, such that when the collapsible cover is placed over an item, the flexible skirt at least partially secures the collapsible cover on the item." Zheng discloses a mat (10) having a panel (12) and a frame member (24) within a sleeve (22). Zheng

also discloses a separate fabric covering (14) having an elastic band (44) within a sleeve (48), where the fabric covering (14) is removably attached to the panel (12) and the fabric covering (14) does not include a frame member. The fabric covering (14) of Zheng is not fixedly coupled to the panel (12), which includes the frame member (24). Thus, Zheng does not disclose or suggest a collapsible cover including a flexible panel having a frame member contained within a perimeter pocket of the flexible panel, and a flexible skirt fixedly coupled substantially along the perimeter of the flexible panel, as recited in claim 1.

Accordingly, at least for this reason, claim 1 is allowable over Zheng. Based at least on their dependence upon claim 1, claims 2-18 and 20-29 (claim 19 is canceled) are also allowable over Zheng. In addition, claim 1 and its dependent claims are also allowable over Zheng in combination with either Foster or Mueller.

Independent Claim 30 and its Dependent Claim are Allowable

Independent claim 30 similarly recites “a flexible skirt fixedly coupled to and extending from at least a portion of the perimeter of the flexible panel.” Thus, claim 30, and its dependent claim 31 are allowable over Zheng for at least the reason discussed above. In addition, claim 30 and 31, are also allowable over Zheng in combination with either Foster or Mueller.

New Claim 32 is Allowable

New independent claim 32 recites “a cover having a panel portion and a skirt portion, the panel portion of the cover defining a perimeter” . . . “a coilable frame member fixedly coupled substantially at the perimeter of the panel portion” . . . and “the cover defining an opening configured to receive a rigid substantially planar item defining a perimeter when the coilable frame member is in the expanded configuration, the perimeter of the panel portion of the cover being disposed proximate the perimeter of the substantially planar item when the substantially planar item is received within the opening.”

None of the cited references, alone or in combination, disclose or suggest a cover as recited by new claim 32. For example, none of the cited references, alone or in combination, disclose or suggest a cover having a panel portion, a skirt portion, and defining an opening configured to receive a rigid substantially planar item, where a perimeter of the panel portion of

the cover is disposed proximate a perimeter of the substantially planar item when the substantially planar item is received within the opening, as recited in claim 32. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that new claim 32 is allowable over the cited references.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of rejection in the Office Action have been properly traversed or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all outstanding rejections. Applicant believes that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that further personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

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